



Shipbuilding at Westport Point, drawing by Ray Shaw

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT *What a year!*



In some ways it was a typical year for the Historical Society—over 1000 visitors to the Handy House, a full series of informative history programs, lots of interaction with school kids, a well-attended Artisan Fair, a fun spooky Halloween program, and great loyal support from our members. But it strikes me that we took the Historical Society to a new level in 2017. Our first-ever House Tour was a great fund raiser and the feedback was so positive, and support from local businesses so good, that we plan to do it again in 2018. Volunteer support was terrific: we needed over 60 volunteers for the house tour, and everyone reported they had a great time. We also instituted a Development Committee to ensure our fund-raising is aligned with our activities and plans for the future. This year's exhibit at the Handy House, "Headwaters to Harbor, Westport's Heritage of Water," was the most ambitious we've ever done, thanks to the curators Jenny O'Neill and Ray Shaw. (We also opened the Handy House every Saturday, rather than twice a month.) Finally, we completed the service building, with handicapped-accessible bathrooms, storage space, and a small kitchen for catering events. The style and modest size of this barn structure fits in beautifully with the Handy House.

It was a fine year indeed, and THANKS to all the volunteers and members who made it possible.

Tony Connors, President



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2017 was a year of “groundbreaking” events which included a new fundraiser, a symposium, a major exhibition, and a construction project. It was a year in which we saw some of our long-term plans come to fruition, such as our new building at the Handy House, and a year in which the Historical Society took an enormous step forward towards ensuring its own financial sustainability.

IMPROVING VISITOR AMENITIES AT THE HANDY HOUSE

With the completion of the “barn” at the Handy House, we are now able to provide visitors with essential bathroom facilities. This building also contains a storage and utility space to support the ongoing operation of the historic Handy House. The Historical Society is enormously grateful to the Manton Foundation, and to the many individuals who contributed to this project. A new septic system was funded through a Community Preservation Act grant.

TELLING THE STORY OF OUR TOWN

This year’s exhibition, *Headwaters to Harbor: Westport’s Heritage of Water*, explored our relationship with the river, beaches and maritime industries. The exhibition occupied four rooms inside the Handy House, each room presenting a different story: river journey, swordfishing, East Beach and shipbuilding. Although the Handy House is a challenging space in which to present exhibitions, with the help of co-curator and graphic designer Ray Shaw, it has been possible to develop methods of displaying objects and labels without disturbing the special architectural interiors within the house.



EVOLVING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT THE HANDY HOUSE

Visitors were offered a more regular opening schedule as well as the opportunity to take a docent-led tour to supplement the self-guided experience. The Historical Society is fortunate to have retained a wonderful team of Handy House docents, who offer our visitors a warm welcome and knowledgeable responses to any questions. This summer we held a series of hands-on workshops at the Handy House geared towards families, which explored our maritime heritage including activities relating to knot tying, scrimshaw and wampum making.

PROVIDING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON PAUL CUFFE AND THE WAINER FAMILY

In September we hosted a symposium on Paul Cuffe in association with the New Bedford Historical Society, and a number of other local organizations. As part of this event, we launched the African American and Native American Heritage Trail, creating a brochure and a new website www.paulcuffe.org. This trail highlights locations relating to the family of Paul Cuffe and Michael Wainer, such as the windmill at the Point, the correct location of his property, and a number of other sites in Dartmouth and New Bedford. The Historical Society is very thankful for generous contributions from BayCoast Bank, Ralph and Calla Guild, Al and Cindy Lees and grants from the Westport Cultural Council and Helen Ellis Charitable Trust.

ENGAGING YOUNGER AUDIENCES

During fiscal year 2017, the Children's Heritage Education Program interacted with grades K-6 in the Westport Community Schools. We reached a total of 585 students and continued our long-term collaboration with the Westport Education Foundation and the Westport River Watershed Alliance. New programs focusing on the Macomber Turnip and Paul Cuffe were introduced to grades K-2. All programs were tied to grade level education standards. We introduced our first after school program



“Counted Cross Stitch” taught by volunteer Robin Winters and with enough volunteers for a 1:1 instructor to student ratio.

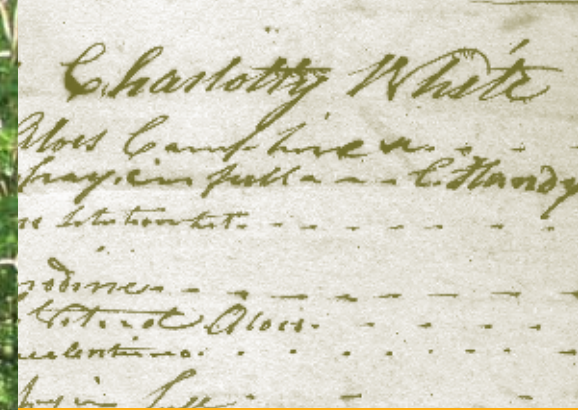
We also introduced our first summer program for kids at the Handy House, linking hands-on history to the water-themed exhibition. In addition to Westport public school students, this program brought in home-school students and students from other schools outside the district. Many thanks to Erika Hamer, Marilyn Packard Luther, Howie Gifford, and the 1850s Ladies for volunteering to teach these workshops. In total, this year, the Westport Historical Society Children’s Heritage Education Program interacted with Westport students forty-three times. Teaching local history and introducing students to hands-on learning is successful through the positive support of the Westport Community School District, especially Macomber Primary School Principal Carolyn Pontes, and, our numerous dedicated volunteers.

PRESERVING WESTPORT’S HISTORY

The Historical Society’s collection includes 5000 photographs, 4000 documents, 1500 objects and 377 books. This year our postcard collection, which is already very extensive, received two significant additions: a wonderful personal collection donated by Jan Hall; and the long-term loan of the Al Lees postcard collection from the New Bedford Whaling Museum. However, we still have some significant work ahead of us, especially concerning the need for adequate storage for our collection.

SECURING FINANCIAL STABILITY

The biggest event of the year, our inaugural House Tour, took place on August 6th. Seven private homes, 60 volunteers, 400 attendees and an absolutely perfect summer’s day combined to create a memorable experience for everyone. It certainly was an extraordinary way to showcase Westport to residents and visitors and, most impressively, raised \$31,000 (net) to further our mission. This event has positively



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
October 1 2016 – Sep 30 2017

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Direct Public Support	\$57,148.01
Grant Revenue	\$12,400.00
Special Events	\$34,720.60
Investment income	\$16,800.00
Other	\$59.38
Sales of merchandise	\$1,380.26
Program Fees	\$2,823.00

TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT \$125,331.25

EXPENSES

Fundraising	\$5,130.54
Contract Services	\$11,389.76
Facilities	\$1,519.35
Utilities	\$7,237.35
Operations	\$9,913.45
Program	\$17,175.79
Other	\$5,223.12
Payroll	\$52,917.92
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$110,507.28

transformed what had been an uncertain financial future for the operating budget of the Historical Society. Plans are already underway for our 2018 House Tour!

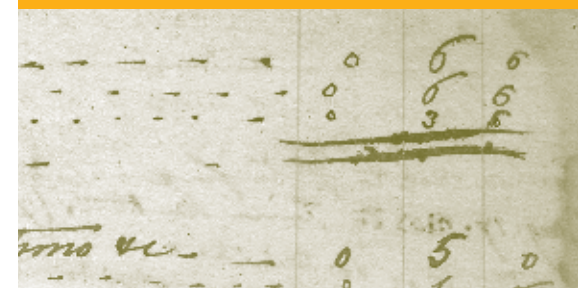
INCREASING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Crafting events and activities that engage all members of our community remains a core goal. Our audience is diverse in age, interest, and increasingly diverse in location through our website and Facebook page. New initiatives this year included a downloadable brochure for a self-guided walking tour of the Point and the Head. We continued to build upon initiatives such as Westport Summer Passport and to present a year-round schedule of lectures and our signature annual events such as the Artisan Fair and Halloween at Handy House, each attracting several hundred visitors.

LOOKING AHEAD

What follows such a groundbreaking year? In 2018 we hope to continue the theme of transformation. Visitors to the Handy House can expect much improved parking facilities, and an ever-deeper experience of local history with a special focus on archaeology. Our 2018 exhibition will use the thousands of fragments unearthed at the Handy House and the Waite-Kirby-Potter site to tell the story of life in 18th and 19th century households. As the Board prepares to embark upon long-range visioning and strategic planning, we remain grateful to our supporters and for the boundless curiosity and enthusiasm of our members, donors, researchers, volunteers and visitors.

Jenny O'Neill, Executive Director





Thank you!



DONATIONS RECEIVED BETWEEN OCT 1 2016 - SEP 30 2017

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions by many individuals at all levels. Given space limitations we are unable to include all donors. This list includes contributors of \$100 plus.

\$100-\$249

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- Donald Reilly
- Emily Richardson
- Samuel Riley and Kristie Furrow
- Dennis and Ruth Rog
- Angela Roy
- Robert and Carol Russell
- Ricardo and Susan Sanchez

BALANCE SHEET	
September 30, 2017	
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash	\$81,839.85
Accounts receivable	\$5,434.00
Other current assets	\$791.50
Sylvan Endowment	\$76,026.46
Board designated endowment	\$306,111.45
Handy House restricted funds	\$224,007.85
Total Assets	\$694,211.11
LIABILITIES	
Total current liabilities	\$35.63
Total liabilities and assets	\$694,175.48

Financial statements compiled by Meyer, Regan, and Wilner CPA can be viewed on our website.





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 Terry and Elizabeth White

\$5,000-\$9999

Anonymous
 Neil and Sue Van Sloun

\$10,000+

Anonymous

GRANTS

Westport Cultural Council
 Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust

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The Charlene and David Howe
 Foundation in honor of Ed Howe
 IBM International Foundation
 Howard Bayne Fund
 Guild Family Foundation
 Manton Foundation
 Stearns Charitable Trust
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 Grays Gristmill
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 The Pilgrim William White Society
 The Westporter
 Westport Chiropractic Inc
 Westport Federal Credit Union
 Westport Point Neighborhood Assoc.
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RYAN SCOTT JOHNSON

\$250-\$499

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- Alden Hill Real Estate
- Bayside Restaurant
- Christopher Wise Architect
- Country Woolens
- Coyne and Powers Insurance
- Dennis Talbot Inc.
- Hasbro
- Kozy Nook Restaurant
- Lees Market
- Partners Village Store
- Star Forge
- Steel Dog
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\$5000+

- Bay Coast Bank

A very special thank you to the following businesses for donating professional services:

- Tim's Lawn Care
- Geraldine Millham Design
- Evelyn Audet Lighting Design

Support LOCAL HISTORY!

The Westport Historical Society is supported by donations from individuals, foundations and businesses who care about preserving the special heritage of Westport. In addition to joining the Historical Society as a member, please consider these other ways you can support our mission:

CONTRIBUTIONS IN HONOR OR MEMORIAL GIFTS

Honor a friend or relative, commemorate a special anniversary or mark the passing of a loved one with a contribution.

BEQUESTS

Leave a lasting legacy for the future by naming the Historical Society as a beneficiary in your will.

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

Please check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gift program.

BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS

The Historical Society offers local businesses many different levels of sponsorship and recognition.

THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESSES MEMBERS

- Attorney Dorothy P. Tongue P.C.
- Baycoast Bank
- Bradshaw Insurance
- Country Woolens
- Comfort of Touch
- Credit Card Reviews
- Drift Workroom Custom Sewing for Interiors
- Even Keel Realty
- Gray's Daily Grind and Gray's Gristmill
- Geraldine Millham Design
- Jack's Landscaping and Lawn Service
- Lees Market
- Lees Wine and Spirits
- Paquachuck Inn
- Partners Village Store
- Partners Insurance Group
- Potter Funeral Home
- Sisters of Solace
- Slocum Design Studio
- Southcoastal Realty
- Shattuck Gallery
- Tim's Lawn Care
- T.F. Morra Tree Care
- Village Plumbing
- Westport Chiropractic
- Westport Federal Credit Union

